

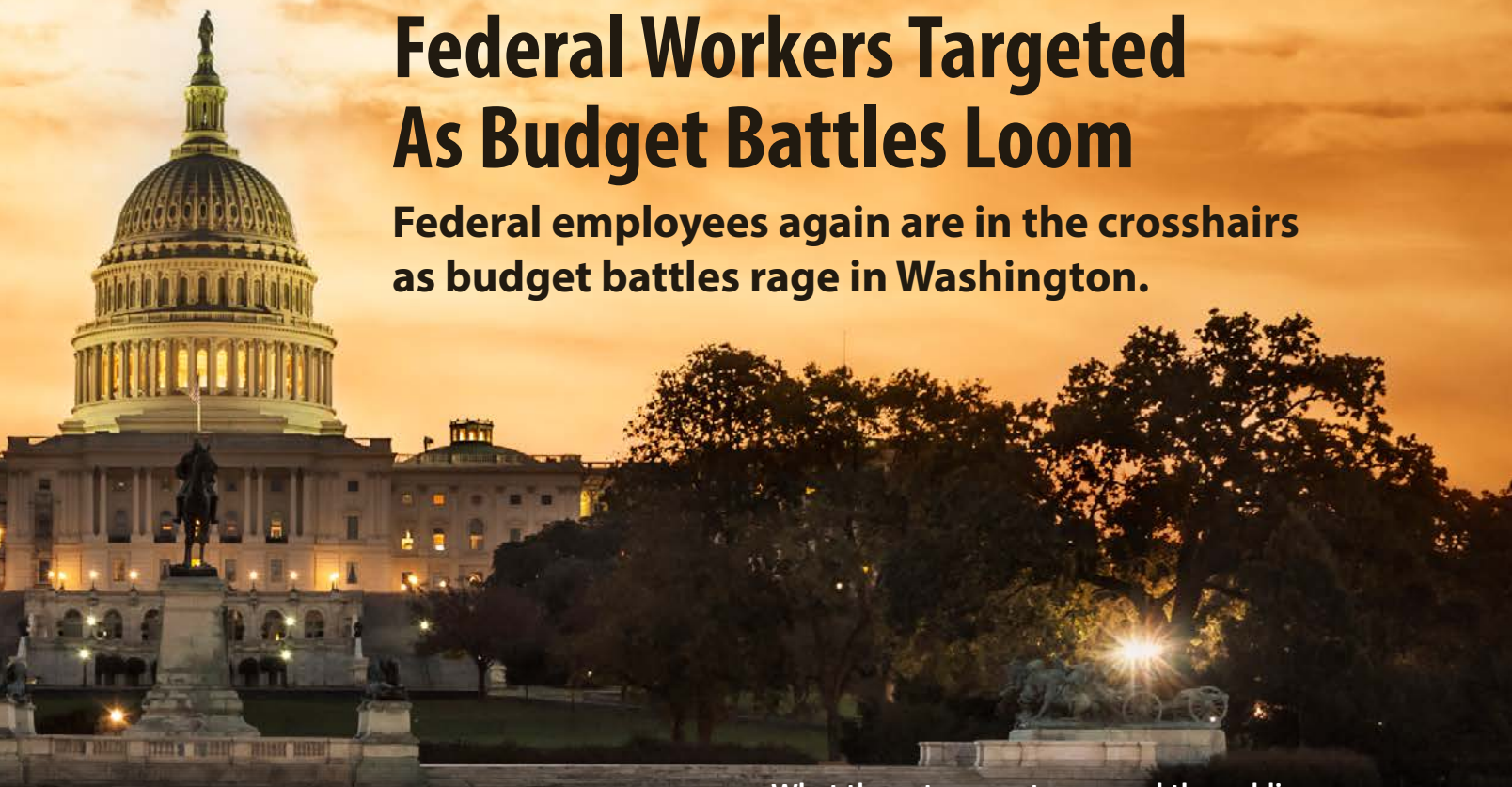


THE GOVERNMENT STANDARD

For current and retired government workers and their families since 1933 • American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO

March/April 2013

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Federal Workers Targeted As Budget Battles Loom

Federal employees again are in the crosshairs as budget battles rage in Washington.

Unless Congress acts to avert sequestration and approve agency budgets through the end of the fiscal year, we will begin sinking into a deepening chasm of furloughs, hiring freezes, forced retirements and major spending cuts that will decimate federal programs and services.

Make no mistake: these cuts will hit us where it hurts the most – in our pocketbooks and wallets. None of us can afford to go one month without a paycheck, especially since our salaries have been frozen since January 2010. Yet federal agencies are preparing to do just that with a mass furlough that would force us to be laid off without pay for up to 22 days.

As this issue of The Government Standard went to print, Congress still had not acted to prevent sequestration or approve agency budgets for the rest of the fiscal year that ends Sept. 30. Unless sequestration is averted, agencies will have to cut a combined \$85 billion from their current year budgets. In addition, current funding for most agencies is set to run out March 27 unless Congress passes another continuing resolution or full-year funding.

What the cuts mean to you and the public

If Congress allows across-the-board budget cuts known as sequestration, American families will quickly see just how much they rely on the federal government.

If sequestration occurs, here's what taxpayers can expect:

- Thousands of Social Security Administration workers will be forced to stay home without pay, meaning longer lines for retirees and workers with disabilities applying for benefits;
- Fewer food safety and workplace safety inspections would take place, putting Americans at risk at home and on the job;

Table of Contents

Sequestration/CR	1
President's message	2
Sequestration, cont.	3
Bowman passing	4
GDP	5
TSA Sacramento SPP	6
VA	7
SBA agreement	8
NP Cox AFL MLK award	9
Inside Government	10
WFP Triangle	11
Factory anniversary	
Y.O.U.N.G., HRT & PRIDE	12

(continued on page 3)



A Message from AFGE's National President *J. David Cox, Sr.*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

February is such a busy month. As I write, I'm preparing to welcome 800 AFGE activists to Washington DC for our annual Legislative Conference. And even though we're facing the most terrible threats, I always look forward to this conference because the energy, commitment, and spirit our members show lifts me up and inspires me. This past week, we've had AFGE Local 2028 President Kathi Dahl testify before the House VA oversight committee about the union's courageous whistleblowing regarding Legionnaire's at the Pittsburgh VA hospital; the AFGE National Organizers training, and a couple of high level meetings at the Office of Management and Budget on sequestration/furloughs and on procurement issues, as well as agency-level activity related to the impending sequester and Congressional efforts to cut federal jobs, retirement, and freeze pay. It's hard times, but I'm loving every minute of working for this great union.

Our focus at the legislative conference will be on two main issues: ending the pay freeze, and canceling the sequester and the threats to force our people out for 22 or more days of furlough. We've also got another looming budget "cliff" deadline before us: the March 27 end to the Continuing Resolution that has been funding the government since October 1.

That cliff could turn into a government shutdown – and we know that goes for federal workers. So there's no chance things will calm down any time soon.

We've been working our tails off getting ready for all of these fights. We have all the facts and figures that prove federal workers are underpaid – not overpaid – to fight against the efforts to freeze pay for the rest of 2013 or even for the next three years. We commissioned a paper by the premier government contract law professor, Charles Tiefer of University of Baltimore Law School and the Wartime Commission on Contract Abuse in Iraq and Afghanistan that shows agencies, step-by-step, how they can achieve almost all of the savings required by sequester through cutting contractors, not us. We've got reams of fact sheets and papers for our members to hand out on Capitol Hill on every issue we face, from pay to health insurance to parental leave to funding for SSA, FAA, EPA,

BOP, DoD and every other agency where our members work. Last month, the NEC met to map out a strategic plan for our union over the next year and beyond. Item number one: 300,000 members by the end of 2013.

We all need to organize, organize, organize in order to build our strength. The stronger we are, the better job we can do in representation at the workplace, the bargaining table, Capitol Hill, and the courts. We talked a lot about reallocation of resources and improved efficiency and we formulated a plan to increase our grassroots activism and PAC. I know you get a lot of emails from me, always telling you there is a crisis and that you need to contact your congressional representatives pronto. But I swear we're never crying wolf, or exaggerating. Please open them up, read them, and then take whatever action is being asked. If we all make those calls and write those letters, we can make a difference.

In solidarity.

AFGE—THE GOVERNMENT STANDARD

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(from page 1)

- FEMA workers would be sidelined just as another hurricane season begins, potentially hampering rescue and recovery efforts in the event of another storm like Hurricane Sandy;
- Nutrition assistance would be cut for more than 700,000 needy women and children, while more than 50,000 children and adults wouldn't receive life-saving immunizations;
- Undocumented immigrants and drug smugglers would have easier access to American soil as the Border Patrol agents would be prevented from guarding the border and pursuing criminals;
- Needed maintenance to our military tanks and weapons would be delayed as the Pentagon freezes hiring and lays off civilian workers.

The Defense Department already has put [employees on notice](#) that they may be furloughed for up to 22 days because of the budget crisis, and the Office of Management and Budget has authorized all other agencies to do the same.

[OMB's guidance](#), in fact, gives agencies carte blanche authority to go after federal employees first. OMB has instructed agencies to consider hiring freezes, unpaid temporary lay-offs, terminating temporary or term employees, and offering incentives for employees to separate or retire.

The Department of Defense [has ordered](#) the services and defense agencies to freeze civilian hiring, reduce base operating funding and curtail a range of spending in such areas as facilities maintenance, travel, training, conferences and administrative expenses. Other agencies are expected to take similar steps.

Contractors given a pass as cuts focus on civilian employees

Unfortunately, OMB has done almost nothing to reign in spending on federal contractors. OMB has told agencies to be "mindful" of how contractors "advance the core mission of the agency," asking ever-so-gently to consider whether any cost savings might be achieved.

"OMB needs to tell agencies to be mindful of how *federal employees* advance the core mission of agencies. The government's own workforce already has sacrificed \$103 billion to deficit reduction while contractors have not been asked to give up a dime," AFGE National President J. David Cox Sr. said.

"Contractors are more costly and numerous than federal employees, yet they are merely subjected to the possibility of cuts. Meanwhile, OMB suggests to agencies a whole panoply of *actual* cuts to the federal workforce," Cox added.

AFGE fired off letters both to [OMB](#) and the [Pentagon](#) in January, highlighting this clear bias toward federal contractors and calling for a more balanced approach to the budget crisis. To balance the civilian hiring freeze, OMB should impose a freeze on new service contracts, on the exercise of contract options and on the approval of contract modifications. Where penalties associated with contract cancellations are lower than the costs of continuing to pay the balance, contracts should be reviewed for termination.

AFGE also voiced its concern that agencies will be allowed to contract out work currently performed by federal employees if our jobs are left unfilled because of hiring freezes, extended furloughs or vacancies occurring from term and temporary employees being let go. Nothing in the OMB guidance warns against the practice, which is both morally and legally wrong. "OMB shouldn't allow this sort of shell game to occur, where agencies fire federal employees and then turn around and hire contractors to do their work. Not only is it dishonest, it's counterproductive if the goal is to save money," Cox said.

One way to save billions of dollars each year is to cap the salaries federal contractors earn at taxpayers' expense. Currently, most Department of Defense contractor employees are capped at a whopping \$763,000 per year in federal subsidies. And there is no cap at all for most non-DoD contractor employees.

Capping these contractor salaries at \$200,000 would save taxpayers at least \$5 billion every year, or \$50 billion over 10 years. "Think about it – we can cut more than \$50 billion from federal spending over the next decade with no impact on government services, simply by subsidizing these almost unimaginably wealthy contractor employees at a slightly less generous level," Cox said.

As these latest budget battles wear on, AFGE will continue to point out the hypocrisy of freezing your salaries while allowing salaries for contractor employees – who often work right beside you – to run rampant. "Congress has had no problem freezing wages for one group of federal workers, yet many lawmakers have turned a blind eye to the outrageous salaries earned by another group," Cox said. "Both workforces are paid for by American taxpayers. What's the difference?"

AFGE Mourns the Passing of National Vice President Dwight R. Bowman



AFGE mourned the recent loss of its 14th District national vice president, Dwight R. Bowman, who passed away unexpectedly on January 17.

“It is with great sadness that we say goodbye to a union brother, effective leader and dear friend,” AFGE National President J. David Cox said. “Our thoughts are with his wife, Gwendlyn, and the rest of his family.”

Bowman was serving his third term as national vice president of AFGE’s District 14, which covers Washington, D.C., Montgomery and Prince George’s counties in Maryland, and Arlington and Fairfax counties and the City of Alexandria in Virginia.

Bowman had been an AFGE activist for close to four decades, beginning his career as president of AFGE Local 2463, Smithsonian Institution. During that time, Smithsonian employees were not protected by federal EEO or Labor Relations laws and regulations. Bowman was successful in establishing unity within Local 2463, persuading another Local to merge with his Local, and in 1979, they successfully negotiated a master contract

agreement which covered those areas under EEO and Labor Relations laws.

Bowman held many other positions within AFGE and throughout the Labor movement, including president of AFGE’s National Capital Area Council 1, Labor Representative on the District of Columbia’s Nuclear Freeze Board, member of the Executive Committee of the Minority Coalition, and National President of the Society of Federal Labor and Employee Relations Professionals.

Bowman most recently sat on the Board of the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO, the Metropolitan Washington Central Labor Council, and the Partnership Council for the District of Columbia.

He is survived by his wife, son, mother, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

The family has requested that donations be made in Bowman’s memory to the American Red Cross, 8550 Arlington Blvd, Fairfax, VA 22031; or Community Services Agency, Metropolitan Washington Council, 888 16th Street, NW, Suite 520, Washington, DC 20006.

GDP Decline a Result of Budget Problems, Says AFGE

AFGE National President J. David Cox Sr. on Jan. 30 issued the following statement in response to news that the U.S. economy contracted in the fourth quarter of 2012, as measured by the Gross Domestic Product (GDP): The decline in GDP was not a statistical anomaly. It was a direct consequence of budget austerity – the economic policy that is the essence of the Budget Control Act and its impending sequestration.

Our economy would not have shrunk if not for the 6.6 percent decline in government spending, particularly the 22.2 percent decline in defense spending. The Center for Economic and Policy Research calculated that this decline in spending cut 1.33 percentage points from GDP growth.

Moving forward, we can expect an even steeper decline in economic growth if Congress fails to cancel sequestration. Cutting an additional \$85 billion in government spending through sequestration will be ruinous not only to economic growth, but also to the lives of furloughed federal employees and people who depend upon them to

provide much-needed government services.

Sequestration could result in two million federal employees being furloughed – in effect, laid off without pay – for up to 30 days in the remainder of 2013. These workers will have less money to spend, causing the GDP to decline further or grow much more slowly than it should. Why would Congress refuse to act to stop this madness? What good can come of sequestration? The answer is absolutely nothing good – only hardship and decline.

Congress needs to show some courage and brains and cancel sequestration. The growing acquiescence to sequestration needs to end. Sequestration punishes the public by endangering our food supply, our borders, a ready military, and basic benefits like Social Security and nutrition assistance for women and children. And it imposes unconscionable hardship on federal employees who have already sacrificed more toward deficit reduction than any other group of Americans.

More than 7,000 AFGE members have joined.

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Thanks to AFGE, Sacramento Board of Supervisors Withdraws Approval for Airport Privatization



Second row from left to right: Elsie Price, Vice President Local 2532, Kevin Mahoney, Agency Chief Human Capital Officer, Michael Chodos, Agency Chief Negotiator, (In front of Michael) Bridgett Bean, District Director Washington District Office, Jamie Canton, Agency Attorney (bow tie) Joe Eitel, Personnel Specialist, Kelly Robinson, Chief Workforce Relations, Sonya Wagasky, Local 605 President, John Miller, Center Director and Elodia Castro, Local 1208 President.

First row left to right: Brenda Wilson, Regional Vice President Region 3 and Local 3841 President, Keith Lucas, First Vice President Council 228 and Local 2532 President, Margaret Johnson, Council 228 Treasurer, Bettina Bradley, Regional Vice President Region 5, Elaine Powell-Belnavis, Union Chief Negotiator, President Council 228 and Local 3134 President, Karen Mills, Administrator SBA, Marie Johns, Deputy Administrator SBA, Charlie Bernhardt, Union Chief Negotiator, Jorge Betancourt, Regional Vice President Region 1 and Local 2951 President, Leroy Harris, Regional Vice President Region 3 and Gail Brogan, Local 2867 President.

After close to one year of lobbying efforts and a public campaign, AFGE in January applauded the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors for voting to rescind its approval for Sacramento International Airport (SMF) to be allowed to privatize, or use corporate airport screeners in place of federal employees. The board last year authorized the airport to apply for participation in TSA's Screening Partnership Program (SPP) and on Jan. 8 voted 4-1 not to proceed with the privatization plan that could have opened up fliers to security risks and led to job losses and de-professionalization of airport screening.

AFGE National President J. David Cox Sr. recognized Local 1230 President James Mudrock for working hard over a long period of time and for skillfully educating the board members on the facts and benefits to the Sacramento community of the continued TSA role.

"We are pleased that the board recognizes the value in a federal workforce at TSA and has revoked its previous approval for privatization," Cox said. "The Sacramento airport authority's attempt to abandon its public servants in favor of corporations with only profit in mind was short-sighted at best. There simply are some functions too important to be left to companies that would be unaccountable to the American people, and securing

American skies is definitely one of them. Privatization is all about money, and is being pushed by private contractors seeking to make a profit from national security."

Airport privatization at SMF was pushed by Sacramento County Airport System Director Hardy Acree, who is a member of two industry groups that are aggressively lobbying to put airport screening back in the hands of corporations. TSA approved Sacramento's SPP application and is in the process of developing a request for proposals to solicit bids from for-profit contractors. Once TSA has issued its request for proposals, an application cannot be withdrawn. After AFGE learned of the council's little known vote, the union immediately pushed back for a re-vote. Working closely with the Sacramento Central Labor Council, AFGE reached out to every member of the Sacramento City Council and the Sacramento Board of Supervisors. AFGE also asked Sacramento TSOS to call their county board members to urge them to reconsider their vote, and asked the general public to sign and send to their county board member a constituent letter detailing how the community would be negatively affected by privatization.

At AFGE's urging, the California Labor Federation passed

(continued on page 7)

(from page 6)

a resolution opposing the privatization of the screening functions at TSA, effectively holding elected officials accountable for their vote. The support of the Central Labor Council and its affiliated unions was crucial in turning this vote around.

“Our officers lived with the threat of this over their heads for an entire year and can now go back to doing what they do best—protecting American skies,” Mudrock said. “We are very grateful for the work by AFGE’s national staff and the Sacramento County Labor Council, both of whom were instrumental in getting this vote turned around. We also would like to thank the Association of Flight Attendants for their continued support and speaking out on our behalf.”

“The dedicated federal screening workforce that works for TSA is a crucial part of defending our nation from a repeat of the horror of 9/11,” AFGE TSA Council 100 President Hydrick Thomas said. “Proponents of a private screening workforce are misinformed about costs and labor issues and should instead be working to empower federal screeners to do their jobs.”

House Homeland Security Committee Ranking Member

Bennie Thompson issued the following statement after the board voted to withdraw the SPP application.

“Today, the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors voted to withdraw Sacramento International Airport’s application to replace its federal screener workforce with privatized contractors through TSA’s Screening Partnership Program. This decision was made after reviewing the Government Accountability Office’s recently released report that called into question the claims of superior performance by privatized screeners. I commend the board for making this fact-based decision and urge other airport operators considering a switch to a privatized contractor screener workforce to consider the findings of GAO’s report.”

Federal workers should be encouraged and protected when they come forward to expose waste, fraud, abuse and wrongdoing in the federal workplace. This legislation provides more accountability for federal workers who testify before Congress, report wrongdoing while carrying out job duties, and protects government scientists from censorship by management and supervisors. It also ends agency restrictions on disclosures that are permissible by statute—such as communications with Congress and whistleblower rights.

AFGE VA Local Leader Testifies on Legionnaires’ Outbreak in Pittsburgh

The House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs invited AFGE Local 2028 President Kathleen Dahl to testify Feb. 5 before the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations in its efforts to analyze the Department of Veterans Affairs’ actions regarding the Legionnaires’ outbreak at a VA medical facility in Pittsburgh. Dahl has served as Local 2028 president since 2011 and represents approximately 2,500 VA employees at the University Drive and Heinz facilities within the Pittsburgh VA Healthcare System. These employees include building maintenance workers, health care professionals providing direct care to veterans and support personnel who handle patient appointments, records and other functions.

“As a Local president, it is my duty and privilege to ensure that all of our employees are provided a safe working environment,” said Dahl. “Since learning about the recent outbreak of Legionnaires’ disease, I have addressed concerns about protective equipment, timely notices to our employees about exposures and proper care, and testing and treatment when exposure occurs.”

Last November the VA announced that five veterans had contracted Legionnaires’ disease at its University Drive facility, and that one of the

patients later died. In subsequent months, media reports indicated the agency was aware of elevated levels of the Legionella bacteria in the water system more than one year before the outbreak. Several employees, who experienced flu-like symptoms similar to those associated with Legionnaires disease, also were tested for the disease. However, the results could not directly tie their illnesses to the outbreak. During the hearing, Committee Chairman Rep. Mike Coffman (Colo.) quoted a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that indicated five

(continued on page 8)



VA - AFGE Local 2028
President Kathleen Dahl

(from page 7)

patients have died since 2011 as a result of contracting Legionnaires' disease.

"Local 2028 President Dahl has done a tremendous job in advising employees of Occupational Safety and Health Administration guidelines and advocating for the proper protections for veterans and employees," said AFGE National President J. David Cox Sr. "Ms. Dahl showed a great deal of courage by testifying, considering management at the facility suggested that she could 'get sick' in order to keep from testifying. Our members risk intimidation and retaliation when testifying before Congress or speaking to the media, but the union is here to protect them every step of the way.

"This hearing shed some light on the sequence of events that led to the outbreak but many questions were left unanswered because VA leadership sent figureheads to the hearing, instead of those with detailed knowledge as to how this outbreak was handled. It is very clear the VA has grossly mismanaged this outbreak and should be held accountable for the negligence that has taken place. VISN 4 Director Michael Moreland also must be held responsible for the lack of oversight and appropriate actions, which appears to have led to the deaths of

American veterans, and for the continued retaliation against VISN 4 employees who speak up for their patients," Cox added.

"The front-line perspective of our members is critical to the investigation of this outbreak and the request of Ms. Dahl's testimony before the House is indicative of the crucial role labor plays in providing the best care for our nation's veterans," said AFGE District 3 National Vice President Keith Hill. "We've worked closely to obtain the latest information and advise employees on how to handle the outbreak. The health and well-being of our nation's heroes is of the utmost importance and we can ill-afford to put their health at risk. It is extremely troubling that the VA dodged important questions about the timely notification of the outbreak to patients and employees and its history of properly maintaining its water systems to prevent this type of outbreak."

During the hearing, Rep. Coffman admonished the VA for its lack of due diligence in effectively monitoring the Legionella bacteria within the water system, and warned that the agency would be "scrutinized" for any attempts to intimidate and/or retaliate against employees who voice concerns over the administration of patient care.

AFGE Applauds New Labor Agreement Benefitting More than 2,000 at SBA

AFGE and the Small Business Administration earlier this year reached agreement on a new labor contract covering more than 2,000 federal employees.

Officials from SBA and AFGE plan signed the contract on Jan. 31 during a ceremony that was streamed live to employees throughout the agency.

"This new agreement has many benefits for both the agency and the SBA employees, and it is a result of committed leadership," AFGE National President J. David Cox Sr. said. "I commend SBA Administrator Karen Mills for her personal support of an agreement and hope that we will see many more labor agreements at other federal agencies settled in the next few months."

The new master agreement extends a number of benefits to SBA employees who are represented by AFGE Council 228, Council President Elaine Powell-Belnavis said.

"The signing of this contract signifies a positive shift in the relationship between AFGE and SBA and will help improve employee morale and the effectiveness of SBA in fulfilling the mission of the agency," Powell-Belnavis said.

Highlights of the new three-year contract include:

- A new flexible work schedule that lets employees work four days a week at 10 hours a day;
- A streamlined process making it easier for employees to obtain approval for telework;
- A series of awards that recognize employees who suggest ways to improve the agency, who have worked for 5 years at a time or whose performance deserves appreciation and commendation;
- Expanded transit subsidies for all employees;
- An expedited arbitration process for employees who receive unfair performance appraisal ratings or are denied within-grade increases.

The new agreement also stipulates that managers, employees and union officials will be trained jointly on the contract.

Stay connected to the latest AFGE news and events! "Like" us on



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AFGE National President Receives Prestigious AFL-CIO Civil Rights Award

AFGE National President J. David Cox Sr. was awarded with the AFL-CIO's *At the River I Stand* award on Jan. 20 during the AFL-CIO's annual Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday observance and conference, *We Are One: Workers' Rights and Civil Rights*, this year held in Philadelphia. The *At the River I Stand* award is given annually to a national leader who has demonstrated an unyielding commitment to civil rights and workers' rights.

"I am so honored to receive this award and sincerely thank the AFL-CIO," Cox said. "I truly believe that public service is the most powerful tool to bridge our gaps, heal wounds, and lift up working families. Further, the labor movement and civil rights movement must be one movement united to end discrimination in all forms.

"I came to see service, and public service in particular, as one of the most powerful tools at our disposal to bridge our gaps, heal our wounds, lift up working families and fulfill the promise of our nation," Cox said. "As Dr. King said, and I quote: 'Life's most persistent and urgent question is, what are you doing for others?' Sisters and brothers, serving others is indeed the highest calling we can aspire to. That's why I went to work at the VA as a registered nurse to serve those who sacrificed for our country in Vietnam and other wars. That's why I became active in AFGE to serve our hard-working members and why I do everything I can to organize and make our union stronger."



*NP Cox with James Andrews,
President of the North Carolina AFL-CIO*



*NP Cox with NVP Thomas, Mrs. Cox, NVP Scott,
NVP McCubbin, and NVP Hill along with AFGE members*

The *At the River I Stand* award is named in honor of the 1968 Memphis sanitation workers who stood at their "river" and made the decision to take a stand against degrading and unsafe working conditions and racial discrimination and for the freedom to form a union. Their struggle demonstrated the deep bonds between the civil rights and labor movements and those who receive the *At the River I Stand* award exemplify the spirit of the Memphis sanitation workers in their lives and work.

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For more info contact Carolyn Williams at 202.639.6406 or willic@afge.org

Are you "Inside Government"?



InsideGov - Families USA Executive Director Ron Pollack

"Inside Government" is AFGE's one-hour weekly radio program. The program can be heard nationally online at FederalNewsRadio.com and 1500 AM WFED in the Washington, D.C., area at 10 a.m. on Fridays. Programs are archived on the Federal News Radio website as well as InsideGovernmentRadio.com. Created in 2006, the program features interviews and commentary on a wide range of subjects that impact the lives and livelihoods of federal and D.C. government workers and the general public and features lawmakers, journalists, celebrities and more.

Previous shows have featured AFGE National President J. David Cox Sr., National Secretary-Treasurer Eugene Hudson Jr., National Vice President for Women and Fair Practices Augusta Y. Thomas, House Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer (D-Md.), Sen. Mark Warner (D-Va.), Congressman Bennie Thompson (D-Miss.), Congressman Elijah Cummings (D-Md.), NBC Political Director Chuck Todd, AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka, The Huffington Post Co-founder Arianna Huffington and many more.

Recent shows have featured:

- DEFCON Chair **Don Hale** discussing the impact sequestration and furloughs would have on public service delivery, national security and the war effort

- Community safety risks associated with understaffing in the Bureau of Prisons with Council of Prison Locals President **Dale Deshotel**
- **Robyn Kehoe** of the Federal Employee Education and Assistance Fund detailing FEEA's work with AFGE to aid victims of Superstorm Sandy
- Rep. **Gerry Connolly**, D-Va., addressing sacrifices federal employees have made toward deficit reduction, including \$103 billion over the next decade
- National President **J. David Cox Sr.** detailing the union's 2013 agenda, including membership and bargaining goals
- National Council of SSA Field Operations Locals President **Witold Skwierzynski** discussing the council's efforts to resolve outstanding articles in its collective bargaining agreement with the Social Security Administration and the union's preferences on who should become the next SSA commissioner
- Highlights from Radio Row at the **Families USA Health Action 2013** Conference

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Remember the Triangle Fire

On March 25, 1911, the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire took the lives of 146 workers, mostly young immigrant women (some as young as 14 years old). The outrage that followed this tragedy led to the growth of the garment workers' union and the strengthening of fire, health, and labor regulations. This moment in history serves as a reminder that as long as corporate greed exists, working people will have to continue to fight for job safety, health protections and humane conditions for immigrant workers.

The working conditions at Triangle and other apparel factories had spurred tens of thousands of shirtwaist workers from more than 500 factories to walk off their jobs in November 1909. Led by the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union (ILGWU), they demanded fire-escapes and fire doors, proper storage of flammable materials, as well as a shorter hour work-week and higher hourly pay. By February 1910, most of the small and midsized factories, and some of the larger employers, had negotiated a settlement for higher pay and shorter hours. One of the companies that refused to settle was the Triangle Waist Company, one of New York's largest garment makers.

Near closing time on Saturday afternoon, March 25, 1911, a fire broke out on the 8th floor of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory. When workers ran to the fire escape, it collapsed dropping them to their deaths. On the 9th floor a critical exit was locked trapping workers inside the building. People on the street watched as the workers began to jump out the windows. Fire trucks arrived but their ladders only reached the 6th floor. In the end, 146 people died and the fire became a rallying cry for the international labor movement.

After years of turning a deaf ear to workers' pleas, politicians were finally forced to respond. The Triangle Fire tragically illustrated that fire inspections and precautions were woefully inadequate at the time. The Triangle Factory was a non-union shop, although some of its workers had joined the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU). After the tragedy, workers flocked to union quarters to offer testimonies and support mobilization. Many of the nation's fire safety laws were created in response to this tragic event.

For more information, visit www.afcio.org/Blog/Organizing-Bargaining/The-Triangle-Fire-Still-Burning-Before-Our-Nation



Photos by the Kheel Center, Cornell University
www.ilr.cornell.edu/trianglefire/



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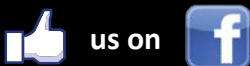
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Y.O.U.N.G.
Training Summit –
August 17 & 18, 2013**

For more information email us
at young@afge.org



**Human Rights
Training Conference
– August 19-22, 2013**

This year's Human Rights Training Conference will offer comprehensive and dynamic classes that reflect the changing responsibilities of union leadership in a diverse work environment.

This training will again offer AFGE members the best instructors, the latest information, and the cooperative environment for networking with fellow union activists.



**AFGE Pride
Summit
– August 23, 2013**

New this year, we will be holding the first AFGE Pride Summit for our lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBTQ) members and their allies.

This training will include best practices on supporting and including the LGBTQ community within Labor and AFGE.